

Fall
2004



State Senator Liz Brater

The Lansing Report



How to Contact Me

Lansing Office

P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536
Toll-Free: 866-305-0318
Phone: 517-373-2406
Fax: 517-373-5679

E-Mail

senlbrater@senate.
michigan.gov

Website

www.senate.michigan.
gov/brater

Dear Constituent,

Greetings from Lansing! It has been a busy summer here, as the Legislature has continued to meet to try to balance the budget. The state continues to struggle with revenues well below the level needed to provide existing services. Due to tax cuts and the economic downturn, current adjusted state revenues are equivalent to the amount the state had in 1980! As federal and state governments reduce spending, public schools and universities and local governments have faced difficult budget cuts and have sought new revenues.

As a state we should be fully funding public K-12 and higher education, social services, health care, roads and transit, environmental protection, and other vital programs. I will continue to work with Governor Granholm and my colleagues in the Legislature to secure funding for these important services.

Of course, active citizen participation in our democratic process is an essential ingredient in the policy outcomes in all of these areas. Many state and federal laws affect the voting process. I have introduced legislation to simplify the voting process and make it easier to register and to use an absentee ballot. With an important election year underway, I have dedicated this newsletter to the election process and information about your right to vote.

I hope you will stop by and see me at one of my community coffees this fall, so I can hear your comments and questions.

My best,

Want to know more?



Mailing funds are limited and I would like to keep in touch with you. Please take a minute to e-mail me your e-mail address so I can send you legislative updates. If you don't have e-mail, please call my toll-free number to receive updates by mail. Thank you!

VOTING – KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Registering to Vote

To register to vote in Michigan, you must be:

- **A U.S. citizen**
- **At least 18 years old by election day**
- **A resident of Michigan and the city or township where you are applying**

Michigan residents must register 30 days before the election date in order to participate. This means you must register by Monday, **October 4, 2004** in order to vote in the fall election. You can register in person or

obtain a mail-in application from your county, city, or township clerk's office; or by visiting any Secretary of State branch office. In addition, specified agencies like the Family Independence Agency, the Department of Community Health, and the Department of Labor and Economic Growth offer voter registration services to their clients. Military recruitment centers also provide voter registration services.

You can obtain an online voter registration application at: www.fec.gov/votregis/vr.htm.

However, the Secretary of State does not allow you to use an absentee ballot the first time you vote if you have registered by mail or through a volunteer voter registration drive. If you move from one city or township to another, you must re-register to vote. If you have not moved, there is no need to re-register. If in doubt about your registration status, check with your city or township clerk to make sure you are on the voter list.

Voting by Absentee Ballot

You can vote by absentee ballot if you meet at least one of the following requirements:

1. Cannot vote without help
2. Are age 60 or older
3. Plan to be away from your city or township on election day
4. Are in jail awaiting arraignment or trial
5. Will be working as a precinct inspector in a precinct other than where you are registered
6. Can't go to the polls because of religious beliefs.

To vote by absentee ballot, send an absentee ballot application or a signed request to your city or township clerk stating your reason for requesting an

absentee ballot. This request must be received by 2 p.m. the Saturday before the election. You may still choose to vote in person at the clerk's office anytime up to 4 p.m. the day before the election. You must request a new absentee ballot for each election. If you know before the primary that you won't be able to vote in person in the general election, you can request an absentee ballot for both elections at the same time.

If you must be away on election day due to sickness, accident, family death, or illness, you may be able to obtain an emergency absentee ballot. Emergency ballots must be returned by 8:00 p.m. on election day.

Attention first-time voters:
If you need to vote by absentee ballot the first time you vote, you must register in person at your city or township clerk's office or a Secretary of State office. In-person registration is the only way first-time voters can receive an absentee ballot. This is of special importance to college students who may be away from home during the November election.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA) ...and How It Affects You

The Help America Vote Act was signed into law on October 29, 2003. This affects every aspect of the voting process, from voting machines to absentee ballots, from poll accessibility to poll worker training. HAVA establishes new rules for a voter who gets to the polls and finds his or her name is not on the **“qualified voter file”** list. If this happens, the voter may be asked to prove his/her residence in the precinct. It is important that you follow the steps as directed by the elections clerk.

If your name is not on the list, three things can happen:

1. The clerk will determine if you are in the proper precinct or direct you to the correct one. If you can produce your **voter registration receipt**, the elections clerk will give you another registration form, which you can fill out immediately and then vote.
2. If you cannot locate your registration receipt, you may be

asked to produce documentation proving your address. To have your vote count, you must provide sufficient proof that you have lived in the precinct and that you registered to vote in sufficient time. It is a good idea – especially for first-time voters – to carry a driver’s license, utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government benefit check, or school ID, showing you have lived in the precinct. In addition, you must fill out an affidavit attesting to the fact that you registered in time for the election. You will then be asked to fill out a new registration which will allow your vote to be counted. If you are allowed to have your ballot placed in the tabulator, your vote has counted.

3. Under HAVA, if your name is not on the voter list and you do not provide ID, your ballot is marked in a **“provisional ballot security envelope,”** your vote will not count on election day! Instead, the clerk will determine within 6 days whether you were registered in that precinct within

the time allowed and whether your ballot will count. If your ballot was marked “provisional,” you are encouraged to contact the clerk after the election to determine if the vote has been counted.

If you have any questions at the polling place, they may be answered by the clerks or by referencing the provisional ballot procedures, which must be posted at the polling place.

DISABILITY ACCESS: One of the provisions of HAVA requires that each voting system used in federal elections be accessible for persons with disabilities, including persons who are blind or have low vision. This requirement can be satisfied by installing at least one direct recording electronic voting system or other voting system equipped to allow equal access and participation, as well as the opportunity to vote independently and privately. These requirements must be met by January 1, 2006. This disability access requirement applies to any jurisdiction which conducts federal elections, regardless of the type of voting system it currently uses.



Contact Your Local Clerk to Register

Ann Arbor
(734) 994-2725

Chelsea
(734) 475-1771

Ypsilanti
(734) 483-1100

Village of Barton Hills
(734) 665-5574

Village of Dexter
(734) 426-8303

Ann Arbor Township
(734) 663-3418

Augusta Township
(734) 461-6117

Dexter Township
(734) 426-2841

Freedom Township
(734) 428-0822

Lima Township
(734) 475-2202

Lyndon Township
(734) 475-2401

Northfield Township
(734) 449-2880

Salem Township
(248) 349-1690

Scio Township
(734) 665-2123

Sharon Township
(734) 428-7002

Superior Township
(734) 482-6099

Sylvan Township
(734) 475-8890

Webster Township
(734) 426-5103

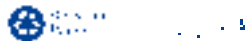
Ypsilanti Township
(734) 484-4700



State Senator Liz Brater

P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LANSING, MI
PERMIT NO. 1200



Office Hours

Office Hours will be held at the following locations. Please stop by to share a concern, ask a question, or just have a cup of coffee and chat.

Monday	Friday	Monday
October 25, 2004	November 12, 2004	December 13, 2004
Sidetrack	Sweetwaters Cafe	Pierce's Pastries
56 E. Cross	123 W. Washington	103 W. Middle
Ypsilanti	Ann Arbor	Chelsea
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	8:00 am - 10:00 am

Voting at the Polls

This year's General Election will be held on **Tuesday, November 2, 2004.**

Polling sites are open from **7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.** Those in line when the polls close will be allowed to vote. Check the Michigan Department of State website **www.michigan.gov/sos** or your city or township clerk's office for your polling location.

Did You Know...



... that you have the right to take printed materials into the polls for your personal use as long as they are not in quantity and as long as you do not distribute them or use them for promotional purposes? However, you **CANNOT** wear or display any button, tee-shirt, placard, or other items promoting a specific candidate or ballot issue.

...that in Michigan the right to vote is automatically restored upon lawful release from incarceration? However, you must register to vote again.

...that it is not legal for anyone to offer election materials within 100 feet of the polling place? It is not legal for anyone to ask you for identification or ask you questions while you are waiting in line to vote. If this occurs, report it to an election official inside the polling place.